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City of Milwaukee Health Department Alerts Community to Extreme Cold Weather this Weekend

The National Weather Service has issued a hazardous weather outlook and a wind chill advisory for the Milwaukee area that will continue throughout the weekend. Temperatures are expected to plummet to 0 degrees with wind chills in the 20 to 30 degrees below zero.

If precautions are not observed, bitterly cold temperatures coupled with strong winds could result in frostbite and hypothermia. Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it and results in abnormally low body temperature, a potentially life threatening condition. Frostbite occurs when unprotected skin is exposed to very cold temperatures and freezes. Frostbite may cause the affected area to appear white or grayish yellow and feel unusually firm or waxy. Both hypothermia and frostbite are conditions that require medical treatment. A body temperature below 95° F is a medical emergency and can lead to death if not treated promptly.

People who are involved in outdoor cold weather activities such as ice fishing, snowmobiling or skiing should always be aware of weather conditions and be properly dressed to protect themselves from the elements.

In addition, the very young and the elderly are more susceptible to extreme cold so it is important to check in on elderly neighbors and please remember that pets need extra care when temperatures fall.

Other cold weather safety tips include:

- If you are going to be outside, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Make a car survival kit including blankets, sleeping bags, extra clothing and high-energy foods.
- Be sure your vehicle's fuel tank is at least half-full and the battery is charged.
- Do not touch metal surfaces with uncovered hands---flesh can freeze immediately to the surface
- Do not drink alcohol before participating in an outdoor activity. Alcohol can reduce your brain's ability to recognize your body's warning signs when it becomes too cold.
- Layer clothing and use hats and ski masks to cover nose and ears when going outdoors.

For more information visit the City of Milwaukee Health Department website at www.milwaukee.gov/health